

# AN OSTENSIBLE PRECOGNITION OF THE ACCIDENTAL SINKING OF H.M. SUBMARINE *ARTEMIS* IN 1971

by KEITH M. T. HEARNE

## ABSTRACT

An ostensible precognition of the accidental sinking in harbour of the submarine H.M.S. *Artemis* in 1971 is reported. A fortnight before the incident, the female percipient (then aged 17) had met some of the crew at a dance when the vessel visited Grimsby, and had become friendly with one submariner. She had a dream a week before the incident in which she saw the submarine sink, in harbour. In the dream, she 'knew' that three men were trapped inside, that two of them were men she had met, and that two of the men would die. The percipient related the dream to several persons over the next few days. On 1 July 1971 the submarine did sink in Gosport harbour, and three men were trapped inside for 10½ hours. There were no fatalities though. The percipient knew two of the trapped men, but they were not the two she had named. Personality and background information about the percipient is given for use in future comparative studies.

## THE OSTENSIBLE PRECOGNITION

On the night of Wednesday, 23 June 1971, a 17 year-old girl living in Grimsby had a 'very vivid' dream in which she saw the submarine H.M.S. *Artemis* sink. She saw a wall by the submarine, so presumed that the incident happened in a harbour. There was a 'scramble' of men on deck, and she 'knew' that three men were trapped inside the vessel. She also had the impression that she knew two of the trapped men (named), and that two of the three men died. The submarine was seen to sink slowly and completely. The girl related the dream next day to her mother, and to several friends over the next few days.

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

The week before the dream, the *Artemis* had visited Grimsby and the girl had met several of the crew, for the first time, at a dance. She became friendly with one of them. The girl was shown over the submarine.

## THE SINKING OF THE *ARTEMIS*

At 7.15 p.m. on Thursday, 1 July 1971, the 'A' Class submarine H.M.S. *Artemis* sank at her moorings at Gosport, Hampshire. The vessel, 282 feet long and displacing 1,500 tons, sank stern first, and disappeared into 40 feet of water in a minute or two.

Ten crew-men had been on watch, and there were three visiting sea-cadets on board. The Chief Petty Officer, David Guest, ran through the vessel making sure that people were escaping to the deck, but he and two other submariners (Mechanical Engineers Donald Beckett and Robert Croxon) had to lock themselves into a water-tight torpedo-storage section, and so became trapped. Those who got away jumped overboard. Incredibly, it was not possible to shut most of the water-tight bulkhead doors because a temporary power-cable ran throughout the length of the vessel. The three trapped men remained

incarcerated for 10½ hours before emerging from an underwater escape hatch. The submarine was raised to the surface on 6 July.

The officer of the watch, Lt. John Crawford, was court-martialled for hazarding the vessel through negligence. It was established at the hearing that a ballast tank had been flooded previously to improve the submarine's stability on being towed from Portsmouth. The tank was left flooded, leaving two hatches very close to the water-line. At the time of the incident, the fuel tanks were being filled with water—a process known as 'first filling'. Eventually, because the submarine was so low in the water, the hatches dipped beneath the surface and water flowed into the vessel. Crawford was severely reprimanded. Chief Marine Engineering Mechanic Robert Wylie, who started to fill the fuel tanks without permission from the officer of the day, was disrated to Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic. Sub-Lt. Ian Mortimer, an engineering officer, was reprimanded. The C.O. of the *Artemis*, Lt. Commander Roger Godfrey, was acquitted of negligence. Chief Petty Officer Guest received the George Medal for bravery in going back on board to save the three sea-cadets, and the B.E.M. was awarded to Leading Marine Engineering Mechanics Donald Beckett, Robert Croxon, and Ian Ralphs. The *Artemis* was reportedly sold as scrap to Mr. Harry Pounds for £20,000 in March 1972.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING H.M.S. ARTEMIS

The history of *Artemis* was a little chequered before the sinking. In 1954, the Admiralty security police discovered that a Stoker mechanic from the Submarine school at Portsmouth intended sabotage against the *Artemis*. The man, 19 year-old John Lyon, was court-martialled and sentenced to a year's detention on two charges of placing grenades in the engines. (There is no suggestion, however, that sabotage was involved in the accidental sinking of the submarine.) In 1956, the *Artemis* was in collision with a motor fishing vessel off the Isle of Wight. The submarine was undamaged.

#### THE PERCIPIENT

The following information is supplied for use in any future comparative studies of percipients.

The woman was born on 26 April 1954. Her childhood was normal. She has a brother who is younger than her. She got on extremely well with her father, and reasonably well with her mother. She left school at the age of 15, not having gained any academic qualifications. At the time of the ostensible precognition, she was working as a sales assistant, selling handbags.

Now aged 27 (1981), the woman, who married a fisherman in 1978 and has a two year-old girl, has recently separated from her husband. She has a strong phobia concerning travelling on buses. For many years the woman has walked long distances rather than get on a bus.

A possible link between the ostensible precognition and prior events in her life is that her father was the skipper of a trawler which sank in the North Sea.

Her scores on Cattell's 16PF (form C, 1969 version) personality test<sup>1</sup> are: Factor: A, 6; B, 6; C, 2; E, 10; F, 9; G, 2; H, 2; I, 6; L, 7; M, 5; N, 1; O, 6; Q1, 6; Q2, 7; Q3, 4; Q4, 10. (M.D. std. score: 3). Her Eysenck Personality Inventory<sup>2</sup>—Form A—scores are: Extraversion: 12; Neuroticism: 22; L scale: 0.

## THE WITNESSES AND THEIR ACCOUNTS

Three persons, who the percipient stated had been told of her dream before the sinking, were contacted in order to check that story. They were:

- (1) An ex-member of the crew of the *Artemis* who had married a girl friend of the percipient. The couple had met on the 1971 visit of *Artemis* to Grimsby. At the time of the sinking he was an Ordnance Electrical Mechanic (1st Class), then aged 22.
- (2) A girl friend of the percipient. Now a housewife, she was a 16 year old sales assistant at the time of the sinking.
- (3) The percipient's mother—who is a housewife and works too in a bookshop. She was 42 at the time of the sinking.

All three witnesses confirmed that the percipient had informed them of the dream before the accident.

*Accounts*

1. "Although I cannot remember any of the finer details, I do remember that — told me of having had a dream that the *Artemis* had sunk, before the event actually happened. I cannot remember whether or not — had told me that *Artemis* had sunk in the harbour or how many men were trapped on board. All that I can assure you of is the fact that — definitely told me of the *Artemis* sinking before the actual event.'
2. '— and I in the year 1971 went out and met some sailors from the *Artemis*. We went out with them for about a week. We met quite a few of the sailors then it was time for them to leave, to go back to Portsmouth. We were upset at them leaving. Anyway, 2 days passed and then in the evening — telephoned me and said that the night before she had a dream. I asked her what it was. She said that she dreamt that the H.M.S. *Artemis* was berthed in port and that it had sunk, trapping four men on board, but she said that one got away and they got the rest out later. She said it was so real—as if she was there. I told her not to be stupid. She said she thought it had happened. It just sank just straight down for no reason at all. Anyway, we left it at that and you can guess my shock when in the paper it read the H.M.S. *Artemis* had sunk just as — said it would happen. She has said things before and I never believed her, but after that we did.'
3. '— had made friends with the lads on the H.M.S. *Artemis* while their sub was in Grimsby for a week I think. The day after they sailed, — got up in the morning after and said "Mum, I have had an awful dream last night. I dreamed that the *Artemis* had sunk"—and there were 3 people, and I think as far as I can remember she said she knew one or two of them. I said "that is because you have gone to bed thinking about them, so don't take any notice of it". She went to work and I did not think any more about it. But on the Friday evening, I believe, I went to bed to read and listen to the radio—which I used to do if any of my children had gone out anywhere. Suddenly I believe on the late night show it came over that H.M.S. *Artemis* had sunk in Portsmouth harbour, trapping 3 people. — also told me in her dream they all got out. When — came home about twelve-thirty or maybe later, I called her into my bedroom and without thinking I said "Can you remember that dream you

had about *Artemis*? Well, it has come true." She immediately said "Oh mam, it hasn't!" and burst into tears, which I felt sorry for saying it so bluntly.'

#### ENTRIES FROM PERCIPIENT'S DIARY

23-24th June 1971:

Had dream that 3 men trapped on submarine *Artemis*. D/Riches, S/Keetes & ? 2 drowned. D/Riches escaped.

1st-2nd July 1971:

My dream came true. The submarine *Artemis* went down in harbour. Three men trapped inside. I feel awful.

#### DISCUSSION

There is no doubt that the percipient had a dream about the sinking of H.M.S. *Artemis* a week before it actually happened. Unfortunately, the case has not been investigated until now, so the witnesses' accounts do not exactly correspond on some details, but the evidence suggests that the other main item in the premonition—that three men were trapped on board—was also foreknown in the dream.

The case is difficult to evaluate, since there were links between the percipient and the persons involved, and the submarine. It is not surprising that the *Artemis* and its crew should feature in a dream of the percipient, especially after it had sailed. It could be argued, say, that the dream symbolized a personal 'disaster' for the percipient, in the submarine's departure from Grimsby. There is even the remote possibility of the sinking having been an unconsciously-achieved self-fulfilling prophecy—if the premonition was known to those involved. Factors which counter such explanations are: (1) The percipient has experienced other precognitions—although they have not been checked. (2) The ostensible precognition of the sinking was particularly accurate—by its reference to three trapped men, and knowing two of them—although those named were not the ones trapped. The 'fatalities' point was incorrect.

The possibility that something in the percipient's history somehow 'sensitizes' that person to a particular type of precognition is again raised by the fact that the percipient's father escaped from a trawler which sank in the North Sea. In the Flixborough explosion case<sup>3</sup>, the female percipient remembered lying in bed as a child listening to loud bangs from a pumping station. Further research is required to determine whether this hypothetical 'early sensitizing effect' shows consistency between cases.

It should perhaps be noted that another news-item on 1 July 1971 was of the death of three Soviet cosmonauts. They perished when their re-entry vehicle depressurised catastrophically. These men could also be said to have been 'trapped inside the vessel'. Was there a link between the ostensible precognition and the Soyuz disaster? Was the *Artemis* precognition somehow reinforced by the conceptually-similar Soyuz event? Or, was the precognition really about Soyuz—but portrayed in imagery familiar to the percipient? Attention is simply drawn to the basic similarities between the two accidents.

Another factor of unknown significance, is an association between this

percipient and an event apparently precognised by another Grimsby Percipient.<sup>3</sup> The 'other' percipient (who had, it seems, fore-knowledge of the Flixborough explosion), while walking along Welholme Road, Grimsby on the morning of 24 June 1980, felt a strong presentiment that an explosion would occur in that road. A few hours later, a gas-cylinder explosion caused extensive damage to a house in that road. The 'Artemis' percipient narrowly missed possible injury—she walked by the house a few minutes earlier.

## REFERENCES

1. Cattell, R. B. and Eber, J. A. (1969). *Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire*. Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Illinois, U.S.A.
2. Eysenck, H. J. and Eysenck, S. B. G. (1964). *Eysenck Personality Inventory*. University of London Press.
3. Hearne, K. M. T. (1982). An Ostensible Precognition of the 1974 Flixborough Disaster. *J. Soc. psych. Res.* **51**, 210–213.

The Percipient and witnesses have seen typewritten copies of this report and have confirmed that they are satisfied with it.

## APPENDIX

## STATEMENT BY PERCIPIENT

On the night of Wednesday 23rd June, 1971, I had a very vivid dream in which I saw the submarine H.M.S. *Artemis* sink. I saw a long stone wall near the submarine and presumed that the incident occurred in harbour. There was a scramble of men on the deck. In the dream, I 'knew' that 3 men were trapped inside, and that 2 of them were persons I had met in real life (D. Riches & S. Keetes). Two of the 3 died. The submarine sank slowly and completely. I reported my dream to my mother and several friends over the next days. I was amazed and frightened when on returning home on the night of 1st July 1971 from an evening out, my mother informed me that H.M.S. *Artemis* had sunk in harbour. A week before the dream, the submarine had visited Grimsby and I met some of the crew at a dance. I became friendly with one of the crew. Two of the 3 men abroad were indeed persons I had met when the submarine visited Grimsby. (Guest and Beckett).

(Signed by Percipient.)

36 Deerhurst Grove  
Bransholme, Hull  
N. Humberside HU7 4QF